

DBHDS/Office of Developmental Services

SIS® Appeals Process

What is the Supports Intensity Scale® (SIS)?

The Supports Intensity Scale® (SIS) is a standardized and norm-referenced assessment which was developed in 2004 by the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD). This assessment has been tested nationwide to ensure validity and reliability. More information can be found on the AAIDD web site: www.aaidd.org.

The Supports Intensity Scale® (SIS) is a support needs assessment which gathers information through a face-to-face interview with the individual and other people who work with the individual or see them on a daily basis and know the individual well. The people who answer interview questions are called “Respondents.” A trained Interviewer collects information from respondents or the individual on the many areas in community living. The interview questions focus on the supports an individual needs if they were to do these activities. A copy of the long form report is sent to providers/families/individuals within 5 business days of completion. Documentation should be kept on when the information was sent to which providers in case of an appeal.

Who Conducts the SIS® in Virginia and how often?

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), a federal government agency, require that a consistent method be used for all individuals across the state to assess the need for services in Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) for Persons with Developmental Disabilities. The Community Services Boards/Behavioral Health Authorities Support Coordination/Case Management Services is responsible for completing an Adult SIS assessment for every individual within 60 days of entering the Waiver and every 3 years thereafter. The Children’s SIS is completed every 2 years and is exempt from the IRR and Appeal process until the normed version is produced by AAIDD. If the individual is moving from a TC, a complete SIS will have already been done and it is a team decision as to whether a new one needs to be completed within the 60 time frame. An Interviewer must receive 2 days of training and demonstrate the he or she can independently conduct an interview correctly.

The Support Coordinator/Case Manager is responsible for informing the individual, the individual’s guardian, people who work with the individual and family members, as appropriate, of the need to schedule the interview. The Support Coordinator must assure that at least two respondents from those who have worked with the individual regularly for at least 3 months, and/or individuals who know the individual and frequently observe them in different environments. These environments may include home, work, school, and out in the community. The individual being assessed should be encouraged and supported to attend and may also serve as a respondent.

What are the responsibilities of a respondent?

A respondent is charged with providing guidance to the individual being assessed in an effort to present honest and accurate information to the SIS Interviewer so that a clear picture of the individual's support needs are fully captured. The questions are based on the assumption that the person, if doing the activity, needs a certain type and level of support to be successful should the individual engages in the activities discussed.

What if there are concerns about how the SIS® was conducted?

The Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) may be appealed by the individual, the provider, his/her representative, or her/his family if they feel that the standard operating procedures were not followed. A SIS score is not appealable.

In order to appeal the SIS, the family or individual, or provider must submit in writing to the State SIS Coordinator in the Office of Developmental Services how the SIS Standard Operating Procedures were not followed (see attached procedures and checklist) and how attempts to work with Support Coordinator and the Developmental Services Director of the Community Services Board (CSB)/Behavioral Health Authority (BHA) or Training Center (TC) have failed. The support coordination CSB/BHA/TC may give the family the necessary paperwork to begin this process. The paperwork will also be available on the Office of Developmental Services website. (See page 6, attached)

Process for Appealing the SIS Related To Standard Operating Procedures Being Followed

1. All SIS appeals will follow the Administrative Review Process in regards to time frames, written responses to appeal, appeal process steps. Individuals, providers or family members have 30 business days from the date of the SIS to appeal or the date they received the SIS which should be substantiated by a fax date and time.
2. A letter and Standard Operating Procedures checklist must be submitted to the CSB/BHA/TC Developmental Services Director whose Interviewer administered the SIS. The CSB/BHA/TC has 10 business days to respond to the appeal in writing.
3. If not satisfied, a letter, review of process to date, and Standard Operating Procedures checklist (See page 6) must be submitted to the VA State SIS Coordinator in the Office of Developmental Services, (1220 Bank Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219) requesting an appeal.
4. The State SIS Coordinator who is a state Master Trainer will review the request with the Regional Review committee to include an additional SIS Master Trainer. A final decision will be rendered within 30 business days.
5. All SIS Appeals will be tracked by the State SIS Coordinator.
6. If the appeal is justified, a new SIS will be completed by a designated Interviewer at the CSB/BHA/TC within 60 days.
7. The new results will be entered into the online system. The appeal will be denied if there is no evidence that standard operating procedures were not followed.

Standard Operating Procedures for the SIS

1. The SIS is administered by a VA trained SIS Interviewer as outlined in the SIS Protocol. Only the Virginia version of the SIS will be utilized. Requirements of a VA trained SIS Interviewer:
 - a. The person administering the SIS is a trained support coordinator/case manager with a minimum of 3 months experience working with individuals with developmental disabilities; has attended SIS training with a VA certified SIS Master Trainer and knows how to request and verify information from respondents.
 - b. **Master Trainers** have attended SIS Interviewer Training, the Administrator Training, and the VA Master Trainer Training. The state **Master Trainer** provides reliability training to agency staff designated as a **SIS Administrator**, who has attended the AAIDD SIS Training. Once SIS Interviewers achieve an inter-rater reliability (IRR) of 80% or better on the SIS, they become an approved **SIS Interviewer**.
 - c. Within the first quarter and every year thereafter each Support Coordinator or Training Center staff conducting solo interviews, a **Master Trainer or SIS Administrator** interviews with the trainee and conducts inter-rater reliability (IRR). The Support Coordinator or Training Center staff person receives feedback on interview techniques and scoring. Once the support coordinator or hospital staff person receives a score of 80% or better he/she is certified to independently conduct SIS interviews.
2. The SIS Interviewer discusses with the individual being interviewed who he/she wants to participate in the SIS interview. The following guidelines are in place related to respondents:
 - a. The SIS is administered with 2 or more respondents who know the individual well, in a group setting. Respondents must have known the individual at least 3 months and have had recent opportunities to observe the individual in one or more environments for substantial periods of time.
 - b. The individuals providing support services and the individual are always the first choice of respondents. People who may know the individual well and understand his/her support needs may be part of interview and include: Parent, siblings, spouse, other family members, friend, neighbor, roommate, employer, Direct Support Professional staff, and other provider staff who know individual well.
 - c. If the SC knows the individual well, they may count as one of the respondents. Note- At no time should the SIS take place with just the Individual and the SC, at least one other respondent is required.
3. All questions must be asked and be answered in the interview process.
4. Answers to the questions are based on the support needs that the individual would need if they were to engage successfully in each activity whether or not the supports are being currently provided.
5. The scores for each question are discussed and agreed to by the individuals present. An overall consensus is reached for each question.

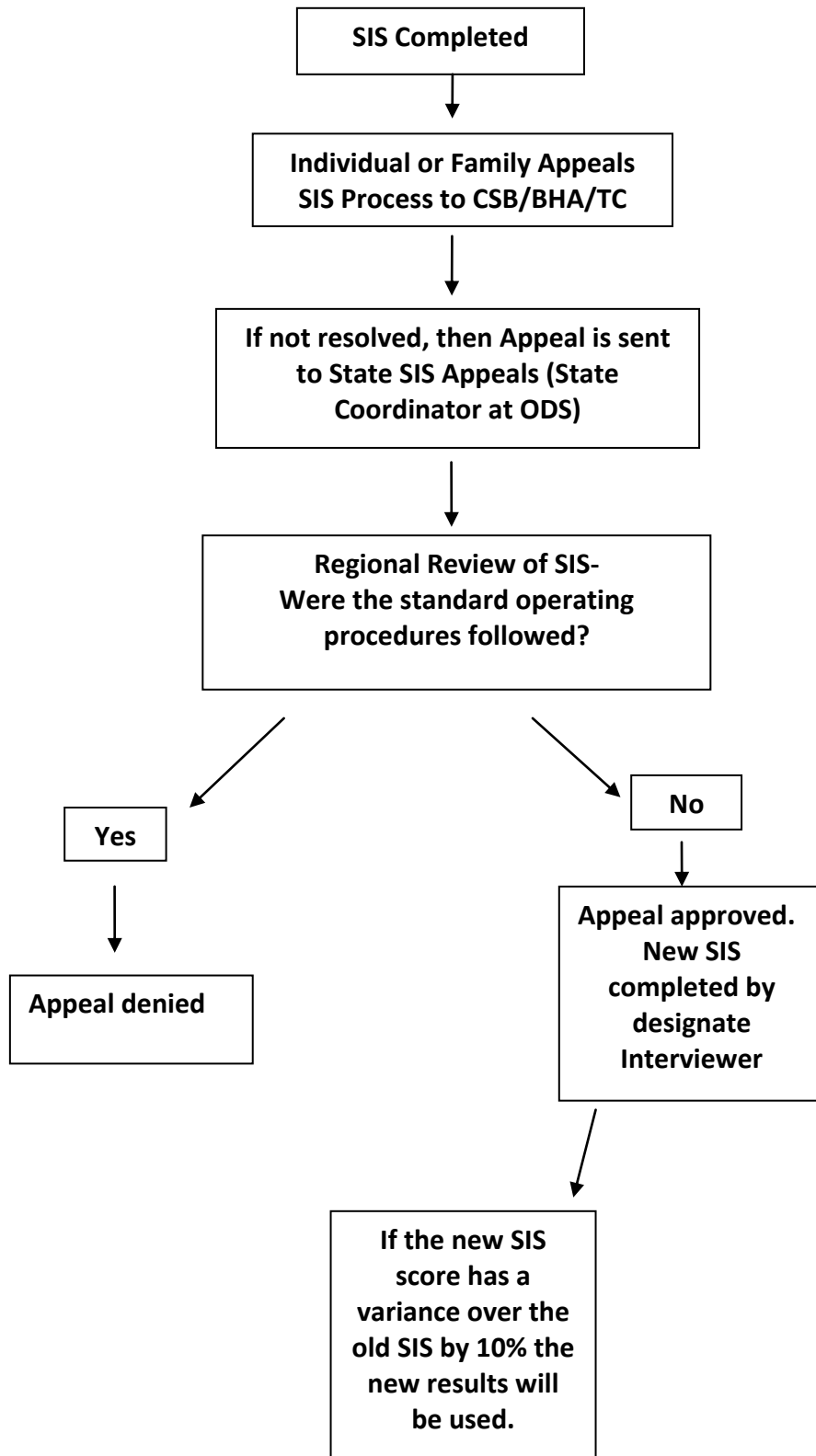
6. If the rater cannot score a question and needs additional information from another respondent, the rater should discuss this with the group.
7. Individuals who have Exceptional medical or behavioral needs are identified in Section 3A and 3B of the SIS. The Risk Section 4 is completed and based on the scores for the Exceptional Medical and Behavioral sections. The SIS administrator reviews the SIS scores to ensure the needs were addressed.
8. A SIS process form (See page 7) must be checked by the Interviewer and signed by everyone prior to leaving the meeting after the SIS is completed.

Virginia SIS Interview Guidelines

These guidelines have been developed to assist Interviewers and the focus person in having the most beneficial time to review support needs for the planning meeting. Please ensure staff has access to these guidelines prior to the SIS Interview.

1. What respondents can bring to the interview
 - An open mind and empty hands.....
 - No copies of booklets
 - No copies of old SIS's
 - No copies of SIS expanded clarifications
 - No other assessments like the LOF, ICAP, etc
2. There is to be no video or audio recording of the meeting
3. Cell phones, Blackberries, Droids and the like should be turned off. If respondents are waiting for an emergency call, they should ask for a break to check their messages.
4. The Essential Information and Profile will be available to any interviewer who is not familiar with the individual being interviewed.
5. The SIS Interviewer will determine the score if there are differing views from different program areas.
6. The Respondent Acknowledgement of Completion of SIS® form should be signed by everyone at the interview immediately following the session.
7. The Interviewer must enter the results into SISOnline and send the hard copy of the report to individuals, providers and family members as appropriate within 5 working days.

SIS Appeals Process Flow Chart




Please send this checklist and a letter requesting an appeal to the Va State SIS Coordinator in the Office of Developmental Services at the address listed below. Attach documentation of communication with the Interviewer and CSB about issues. Mail to:

*SIS Appeals
Office of Developmental Services
1220 Bank Street
Richmond, Va 23219*

Individual, Provider, or Family Checklist for SIS® Appeals

Name of individual who receives services: _____ CSB/TC: _____

Please check the item(s) that were not followed during the SIS interview in which you participated.

| | |
|---|---|
|  | Standard Operating Procedures for Conducting a SIS |
| | |
| | Were at least two individuals present that know the support needs of the individual being rated? Appropriate individuals for a SIS interview consist of: The individual being rated who can communicate verbally or through some other communication device, parents, siblings, other family members, friends, neighbors, roommates, employer, Direct Support Professionals, spouse or any other individual who knows the individual well and sees them at least weekly in several environments. Note- if the support coordinator knows the individual well, they can count as one respondent. |
| | Did the rater explain each question prior to scoring it? |
| | Was each question asked and discussed in the interview? |
| | Were the final scores on each question discussed with everyone present? |
| | A SIS interview will last 90 to 120 minutes and should be done face to face. Was the SIS interview completed face to face? Note- phone calls might be necessary to get additional information for a SIS, or with a support staff unexpectedly called to the service area, but the SIS should never be completed in its entirety via telephone. |
| | Was the SIS interview held prior to the ISP meeting? For new Waiver individuals in the first 60 days. |
| | If exceptional medical or behavioral needs were present, were these needs discussed and documented during the interview (If appropriate)? |

Name/ Relationship to Individual Receiving Service

Date

Contact Information


NOTE: The SIS appeal process is available on the Office of Developmental Services web page at www.dbhds.virginia.gov.

Respondent Acknowledgement of Completion of SIS® Process

To be completed at the end of the SIS Interview

Name of Individual who Receives Services: _____

Interviewer's Name _____ CSB/TC _____ Date: _____

| | |
|---|---|
|  | Standard Operating Procedures for Conducting a SIS |
| | |
| | At least two individuals present that know the support needs of the individual being rated and work with the person daily. |
| | The rater explained each question prior to scoring it. |
| | Each question asked and discussed in the interview. |
| | The final scores on each question were discussed with everyone present. |
| | A SIS interview will last 90 to 120 minutes and should be done face to face. The SIS interview was completed face to face. Note- phone calls might be necessary to get additional information for a SIS, or with a support staff unexpectedly called to the service area, but the SIS should never be completed in its entirety via telephone. |
| | The SIS interview was held prior to the ISP meeting? For new Waiver individuals in the first 60 days. |
| | If exceptional medical or behavioral needs were present, these needs were discussed and documented during the interview (If appropriate)? |

Name & Agency of Respondents attending the Interview:

Contact Phone:

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